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INDIAN NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS

EDITED BY F. W. HODGE

VOL. V

No. 2

A SERIES OF PUBLICA-
TIONS RELATING TO THE
AMERICAN ABORIGINES

A MAHICAN WOODEN CUP

BY

GEORGE G. HEYE

NEW YORK

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
HEYE FOUNDATION

1921

THIS series of INDIAN NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS is devoted primarily to the publication of the results of studies by members of the staff of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, and is uniform with HISPANIC NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS, published by the Hispanic Society of America, with which organization this Museum is in cordial coöperation.

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HEYE—MAHICAN CUP

WOODEN CUP OF THE MAHICAN INDIANS

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THE wooden cup herein described and illustrated was recently purchased in New York City at the sale of the collection of Edward A. Housman, of Brookfield Center, Connecticut. The cup, including the handle, is carved in a single piece from an appletree knot, and is ornamented below the rim with an incised pointed design, and is also incised on the upper part of the handle. The receptacle is three and a quarter inches high and four and a quarter inches in maximum diameter, exclusive of the handle. When acquired the cup had attached to it two newspaper clippings which read as follows:

"E. A. Housman is the owner of a wooden cup which has quite a history. It was presented

to Mr. Housman by Mrs. Harriet Fairchild Starr, and it came to her from her ancestor, the original owner, David Munson Fairchild. Mr. Fairchild came into possession of the cup in the year 1740, so authentic history says, when it was given to him by an old Indian chief, Old Siacus, who whittled it out of an apple-tree knot.

Old Siacus was a resident above the Straits, at what is now Gaylord's Bridge, on the west side of the Housatonic, where he had an orchard of apple trees when William Gaylord, the first, settled in that place about 1725. When the township was purchased he was sold out by his chiefs or kindred, yet he was allowed to live in his hut at that place and enjoy the fruit of his apple trees many years, very much to his comfort, and the old trees long stood as sentinels for the last of the race, in New Milford, after he had departed to the happy hunting grounds. . . ."

"Editor *News*—The old Indian cup that Mr. Housman has become the possessor of, and of which you made mention in last Saturday's issue of *The News*, reminds me of an incident connected with the old Chief Siacus, who 'whittled out the said cup from an apple tree-knot.' It was related to me by my wife's grandfather, Peter Gaylord, who was the great-great-grandson of William Gaylord, who was the first white settler at Gaylord's Bridge. The Indians up and down the valley had become uneasy and ugly. Siacus, who was friendly to the whites, advised the

removal of the women and children to the fort, in the vicinity of New Milford village. He piloted them down the river side, by a bridal [*sic*] path, carrying Peter Gaylord, who was a small child, on his back, and kept watch over them, acting as their detective until the Indians became quieted again.

"One of the old apple trees that Siacus set out at Gaylord's Bridge was standing some fifteen years ago, but I presume it has disappeared by this time.

"J. T. UNDERHILL."

The nearest large town to Brookfield Center is Danbury, Connecticut, and although it has been found impossible to identify with certainty the newspaper from which these clippings were taken, they are doubtless from *The News* published at Danbury. No positive date can be given these clippings, but from an article on the back of one of them it would seem to be about the year 1896.

Gaylord's Bridge, mentioned in the articles, is situated at the present Gaylordsville, in Sherman township, at the northern end of Fairfield county, Connecticut. The New Milford mentioned

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	<p>in Mr Underhill's letter is in New Milford township, Litchfield county, about seven miles from Gaylordsville.</p> <p>The Handbook of American Indians (<i>Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, part 1, page 786</i>) states:</p> <p>“MAHICAN. An Algonquian tribe that occupied both banks of upper Hudson river in New York, extending north almost to Lake Champlain. . . . They extended east into Massachusetts, and held the upper part of Housatonic valley The name, in a variety of forms, has been applied to all the Indians from Hudson river to Narragansett bay, but in practical use has been limited to two bodies, one on lower Connecticut river, Connecticut, known dialectically as Mohegan, the other, on Hudson river, known as Mahican.”</p> <p>At present there are some descendants of the Scaticook tribe living near New Milford, and undoubtedly they are the Indians who inhabited the vicinity of Gaylord's Bridge, hence the cup may be attributed to the workmanship of the Scaticook tribe of the Mahican.</p>
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